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SPEECH

OF

MR. WASHINGTON BARROW,

OF TENNESSEE,

ON THE REFERENCE OF THE

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL MESSAGE,

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON MONDAY,
JANUARY 24, 1848.

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SPEECH.

The House, being in Committee of the Whole, proceeded to the consideration of the Annual Message of the President of the United States, and the resolutions referring the same to various appropriate committees.

MR. BARROW, of Tennessee, addressed the Committee as follows :

MR. CHAIRMAN:

If we look into the history of the proceedings of the convention which framed our Constitution, we will find that two prominent ideas prevailed amongst some of its most conspicuous members. The one was, that the executive power ought to be but the reflex of the legislative, and dependent on it; the other took the shape of an apprehension, that the legislative would, in time, swallow up the executive department. Hardly, however, had half a century rolled round, when it was discovered that the simple ideas of our revolutionary fathers were altogether too simple, and that they were likely to prove unfounded in practice. Twelve or fifteen years ago we beheld a Chief Magistrate of the United States assuming almost unlimited power, while the legislative department had ceased, in effect, to be an independent body, and had become the mere registrar of the edicts of the Executive. Then we were constantly hearing of new assumptions of power by the President; vetoes became matters of common occurrence, and the legislature seemed to be impotent to override or resist them. And, as if to cap the climax, this House saw this same President coolly pocketing a bill which had been submitted for his consideration and approval! These things were done, to be sure, by an Executive whose popularity was unbounded—overwhelming; and who had performed something to deserve popularity; whose military achievements added greater strength to the might of an indomitable will. The man I refer to, as every one must be sensible, is Andrew Jackson; a man for whom, though I often differed from him in opinion, I ever entertained a very high respect; and who, compared with some of his successors, would tower above them as the tallest giant rises above a pigmy.

When these things happened, many good men, who deeply regretted their occurrence, consoled themselves with the belief, that when the incumbent left the executive office it would relapse again to the level where the Constitution had placed it, and that the use of so large an amount of power would never be attempted by any other man, and especially by one of inferior character and ability. But what have we witnessed? Hardly have twelve years passed before we find a power actually exercised of which Andrew Jackson would never have dreamed, but from the use of which, great as he was, that bold man would have shrunk back; and exercised, too, (and its exercise gravely defended in this House,) by a man who, while occupying the chair once filled by Washington,

is inferior to any but one who was ever seated there; and in saying this I mean no personal disrespect to the President of the United States. Can his friends and advocates on this floor point us to any great achievements, civic or military, which ought to have placed him in that seat? Can they, will they, attempt to deny that he has exercised a power which Andrew Jackson never pretended to assume, and never would have attempted to use in all the height of his ascendancy—I mean the war-making power.

As, then, even thus early in our history, it is shown that the most important and dangerous power may be used by an Executive of inferior ability and of but small popularity, ought not the determination to sink deep into the mind, of all, to watch its every movement with the utmost care and jealousy? There seems to be something in the very nature of the office itself, drawing after it as it does, so large an amount of patronage, which is calculated to excite the fears of the patriot for the continuance of the independence of the national legislature, and the purity and power of the people. “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty,” and to no department of our Government should the most watchful vigilance be more unceasingly directed than the Executive—be the station occupied by a Jackson or a Polk.

I have said that the President of the United States has exercised the war-making power—a power reserved under the Constitution to the legislative department of this Government. Had I time I would willingly go into an argument to prove this, and would also discuss the origin of the present war. But my time would fail me, purposing, as I do, to touch on other topics to which I think it proper to allude. I will say, however, that, attentively as I have listened to and read the arguments on the other side, here and elsewhere—and I have been sensible that the subject could not be examined with too much care—I have never felt the opinion shaken, that the war was unnecessarily and unconstitutionally brought on by the President of the United States.

I had prepared, on the first day of the present session, a resolution, which I intended to offer, declaring that the existing war with Mexico was unnecessary; that it might have been avoided; and that, in bringing it on, the President was guilty of usurping a power not conferred on him by the Constitution; but, owing to some cause—indolence, perhaps, or modesty, or something else—I never presented it. I have, however, enjoyed the opportunity of sanctioning the amendment moved by my honorable friend from Massachusetts, (Mr. ASHMUN,) and I can truly say that I never voted for anything more willingly in all my life, notwithstanding the repeated taunts and reproaches of our opponents. They tell us that we ought to impeach the President, if we believe he has acted wrong. Impeach the President! Do they take us to be fools? In the present state of political parties in this country, the power of impeachment is almost a dead letter in the Constitution. We could not have even a hope of succeeding in an effort to condemn the President, when a majority of his triers

would be composed of members of his own party, most of whom have already expressed their opinions. No, sir; the Whigs have more sense than to undertake an impossibility. They do not intend to endeavor to impeach the Executive; but, as a majority of this House—the grand inquest of the nation—they have placed a rebuke of him upon their journals, which will continue to blister his name so long as he lives, and will be affixed to his memory while the history of this country endures. And let it stay there! He deserves it all for exercising, whether from ignorance or design, the highest prerogative of sovereignty—for venturing to seize out of the hands of Congress the power to make war. I say, again, let it stay there! I have voted for the amendment containing it, and in giving that vote I have no fear of the dissent of my constituents. They know their rights, and have, in times past, stood up in their defence against a man whom they admired and loved. I want the declaration contained in the amendment to which I am referring to remain on the records of this House. It is the only way by which we can reach the President. Let it stay there as a caution to him, and a warning to all who may succeed him.

Having said thus much, Mr. Chairman, on these points, I propose to call the attention of the committee, for a few moments, to a part of the annual message which has not yet been noticed here. I mean the recommendation to raise an additional force, both of regulars and volunteers, for the Mexican war. As I understand, from the report of the Secretary of War, and from the bill introduced into the Senate by the chairman of the Military Committee, it is proposed that this addition to the army already in the field shall consist of ten regiments of regulars and twenty of volunteers, if so many should be deemed necessary. This would be a large and important increase in the army of the United States, and the proposition demands, therefore, the utmost deliberation at our hands.

As much, Mr. Chairman, as the Whigs of the last Congress have been censured and abused because they voted for the bill recognising the existence of the war, I think they acted right, under all the circumstances. I was not then here, but, had I been, I should have voted as they did. I would have voted for the bill, under a protest, notwithstanding the preamble which was forced upon the minority by the tyranny of a relentless party majority; and I could have justified my conduct before the country and before my God. The whole country, and no section more than my own, entertained the utmost anxiety for the situation of our gallant little army. The crisis was too imminent to allow of inquiry or deliberation. It was believed that Gen. Taylor and his small band were surrounded by thrice their own number, and it was feared that they might be cut to pieces, as the opinion no where existed that they would surrender or retire, whatever might be the opposing force. Under these circumstances, the people at least, in our portion of the country, were ready to send forward ample means to extricate them. I felt as they did. I felt as I should have felt had I heard that

my father was actually engaged in deadly conflict. I would not have stopped to inquire how he got into the fight, nor to weigh nice questions of necessity or right. I should have rescued him at once, if I could, from the grip of his adversary, and have examined afterwards into the grounds of the quarrel. This was the feeling which actuated me; and I rejoiced then, and rejoice now, that the Whig party did not allow themselves to be put in a false position by a preamble which was forced upon them with that design by a despotic majority.

Since that time, Mr. Chairman, we have gone on from one victory to another, until now our enemy lies prostrate before us; and a different case is presented from that which existed during the preceding Congress, or even up to September last. The forces of Mexico have been routed and dispersed; her seaports have been taken; her forts have surrendered to our army; and even her proud and beautiful capital is in our possession. She lies bleeding and helpless at our feet. Even the organ of an administration—whose appetite for blood seems to grow with what it feeds on, especially when it is obtained at the cost of a *small*, instead of a *powerful*, foe; in battle with a neighboring republic, in place of monarchical Britain—is forced to admit that the power of Mexico is utterly broken down. This organ, remarking the other day upon the recent speech of Mr. REVERDY JOHNSON in the Senate, uses the following language:

“Does Mr. Johnson’s historical reading afford him an instance of the power of any *other* country, so extensive, so entrenched, and so distant from its foe, *so completely broken in pieces by war*, in so short a time as our arms have taken *utterly to break down the power of Mexico?*”

Here is an admission from a high authority that the case now presented is widely different from that which existed when former supplies were granted. Here they own that Mexico is “utterly broken down;” that she lies powerless at our feet. Yet it is in this posture of things that the President asks us to increase his army, until it shall amount to some 75,000 or 100,000 men. It is certain, from all the best informed calculations, that we have at this time a force of 45,000 men in the field; when the regiments shall be filled up by recruits and volunteers, already authorized, it will rise to 65,000. Take off 15,000 for the sick and those otherwise disposed of, and still we shall have an effective force of 50,000 men—perhaps I should say of 50,000 “bayonets,” as that is the fashionable word. With this force at his disposal, the President comes to this House, and, through his subalterns, recommends us to increase the army by 30,000 men more. Why does he ask this increase? Does he tell us boldly, as “Old Hickory” would have done, what he wants with these men? Does he say why the people, through their representatives, must grant him so great a military force? No; in reply to the recent interrogatory of this House—the object of which was to obtain such information as would enable us to vote understandingly as to future supplies—he wraps the cloak of official dignity

around him, and tells us that we are attacking the Executive prerogative. I say, for one, that to me his reply is wholly unsatisfactory.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that a wide range of debate and comment is allowed in Committee of the Whole. I will make one suggestion, therefore, in reference to the reply of the President to the resolution offered by the gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. GOGGIN,) to which I have just alluded. It is this. If the Senate of the United States were in Executive session, deliberating on the ratification of a treaty; and if, to aid their deliberations, they were in need of additional information in possession of the Executive, and should apply to the President to communicate it, could he with any face refuse to send it? Now, though we of this House are not the treaty-making power, yet we are a part of the war-making power; and having sent to the Executive for information we deem material in forming our judgment on a grant of additional troops, could not the President have given us that information under the seal of confidence, if he thought the public interest required such a course? And would he not have done so, had there not been something behind which could not bear the light? Let his friends destroy the force of this suggestion, if they can.

But we will return to the annual message of the President—and, in connection therewith, I must say, that it strikes me as rather strange, that he and his Secretary, and his military chairman in the Senate, should ask for so large an additional force, when it is admitted that it will take 8,000 regulars, and 12,000 volunteers to fill up the regiments already in the field. This *deficit* amounts to two-thirds of the whole number suggested by the Secretary of War. Why should not some measure be proposed to raise these men, already authorized by law, instead of demanding ten additional regiments of regulars, and twenty of volunteers? Why is not an increased bounty proposed, or some other incentive to enlistment offered? I, for one, would prefer such a course, as the expense would be thereby greatly diminished. General Scott seems to be of the opinion that an army of 50,000 men will be sufficient to overrun all Mexico. Hear what he states in a despatch, which, it is said, was written in September last:

“Augment this army to 50,000 men, to enable them to occupy at the same time nearly all the State capitals and other principal cities; to drive guerrilla and other robbing parties from the great highways of trade; to seize into our hands all the ordinary revenues of the country, internal as well as external, for the support of the occupation, and to keep the central Government in constant motion and alarm, until constrained to sue for peace.”

If the intention be “to conquer a peace,” we have here the highest military authority for believing that this object can be accomplished with an army of 50,000 men, and I have shown that, without the additional regiments now asked for, we shall have that number in the field, if the recruits, already authorized by law, be raised. If, however, the object of the President be not “to conquer a peace,” but to subjugate and *annex* the whole of Mexico—to absorb

her, or, according to the modern phrase, “to swallow” her—then I am utterly opposed to granting the additional men asked for, whether regulars or volunteers.

I am ready, however, to maintain the true honor and glory of the country. I am anxious to prevent the chances of reverse and disaster to the army already in Mexico; anxious, too, to see an honorable peace speedily brought about; and if it can be shown—which has not yet been done—that to secure these objects more troops are now necessary, I am prepared to grant them. For these legitimate and patriotic purposes I would be willing to vote not only *ten* regiments, but *thirty*, while I should insist, at the same time, that any additional force ought to be composed of VOLUNTEERS.

I will proceed, Mr. Chairman, to give a few reasons why I would prefer volunteers to regulars, if more troops are required for the objects I have indicated. In the first place they can be more easily raised. This is proved by facts which have been furnished since the war began, and which are familiar to all. Every man of the 50,000 authorized under the act of May, 1846, could have been obtained within four months from its passage. Under similar circumstances they could be obtained now. And, if more troops should be deemed necessary, Tennessee and Kentucky, and other States of the South and West, as well as of the North and East, would furnish volunteers in one-third the time they would regulars. Without intending any offence to the regular army, officers and privates—of whom I had a high opinion when it was not so fashionable to praise them as it is now, and when demagogues were fond of railing against West Point and its pupils—I must still say, that I would prefer volunteers, if more troops are to be granted. They are generally of a better *materiel*, are better educated, and possess more stake in the community for which they are to fight. They have, moreover, higher incentives to action, to gallant deeds, and noble daring. When the volunteer goes into battle he fancies that the eyes, not only of his immediate commander and fellow-soldiers, but of all the people of the United States, are upon him; and he feels that, if he performs any act of gallantry or daring, he may not look alone for his reward to the mention of his name in a despatch, but that honor and office are within his reach after he returns home. When striking terror into the hearts of the enemy by some chivalrous feat, which of itself may decide the fortunes of the battle, visions of glory rush upon him and render him invincible; visions, not stopped by the Legislature of his own State, by Congress, or the Cabinet, but bounded alone by the highest station in the world—the Presidential Chair. These incentives do not operate upon the regular soldier. So far from having any chance for high distinction in civil office at home, he rarely succeeds, whatever his merit, in obtaining the smallest promotion in the service to which he belongs. Cast your eyes over the list of privates in the regular army in Mexico, who have attracted the attention of their commanders, or have been men-

tioned in terms of praise, by letters or despatch, and how many are found to have received promotion? Not a dozen, or twenty, at the most. What a contrast is presented in the rewards which await the discharge of duty by men belonging to these two species of military service!

Many other reasons exist, Mr. Chairman, for the preference which I would give to volunteers over regulars, if we are to have additional force. I have not time to advert to them all; but there is a very striking one, to which I wish to call the attention of this committee. After this war is over, the volunteer officer or private will return to his family. He has no further military ambition—no desire to keep up a standing army, that it may afford him the means of subsistence. His object is accomplished; he has defended his country; he has added to the renown acquired by his ancestors, and he goes back to receive his reward in the smiles of his wife and the congratulations of his friends and compatriots. He sinks at once from military into civil life. What is the case in regard to regulars? They very often have no other means of support; they have not left a little farm, the counting-room, the law office, to go and join their brethren in the defence of their country; and it becomes, therefore, almost a necessity of existence that they should use all their efforts to continue the army at the point which it has already reached. Is not this a danger which should startle us, which should make all those who are hesitating upon this subject prefer a volunteer to a regular increase of our force? I could talk half an hour about the dangers of a standing army; I could bring to your recollection numerous instances—especially to the recollection of the other side of the House—where denunciations of a scathing character have been made against all those who are in favor of an increase of the regular army. But I have not the time, and must therefore hasten on to other topics.

I have still another reason, of a general character, Mr. Chairman, for my opinion upon this subject. I have no desire to lend my aid in increasing the already dangerous patronage of the President of the United States. To grant him the ten regiments of regulars asked for, will place in his hands additional appointments to the number of, at least, five hundred and forty officers, of various descriptions—from generals and colonels down to second lieutenants. He already has much greater patronage than Washington, Madison, Jackson, or any other of his predecessors possessed, and I cannot bring myself to believe that the interests or honor of the country would be advanced by increasing it. While upon this subject, sir, I will take the liberty, here in my place, to tender my thanks to my colleague (Mr. JOHNSON) for the bold and eloquent terms in which he, this morning, denounced the increase of Executive patronage. He deserves, too, the thanks of his constituents, and of the whole country; and I trust that, when his remarks are published, he will send me five hundred copies, that I may distribute them in my district. For, sir, we have heard of him in Tennessee as almost the giant of the democratic party there; and when this giant

steps forward and proclaims that the stream of executive patronage is becoming too immense to be further swollen—that it is rolling on, corrupting and to corrupt, instead of fertilizing and confirming our liberties—his constituents, and the constituents of other gentlemen on this floor, may well open their eyes, and exclaim—“This must be so, coming, as it does, from so prominent a democrat, and so good a party man!” I use the term *party man* in no offensive sense.

In addition to the reasons of a general character, which I have thus glanced at, Mr. Chairman, for my opposition to the increase of the army by regulars, I have some personal reasons; personal to the Executive, not disrespectfully so, but personal, because the facts out of which they grow have characterized his action in similar cases. Now, sir, I will admit that, in the present state of parties in this country, it is very doubtful whether the doctrine heretofore avowed, “to the victors belong the spoils,” will ever be destroyed or got rid of, however much many honest men may wish it. In our civil contests it is probable that success will be crowned by office and emolument, and many distinguished and able men insist it is best for this Government that it should be so. But certainly this rule should be applicable only to our civil and domestic struggles; in military affairs there ought to be a different course of conduct. In times of war we are one people, Whigs and Democrats alike rushing forward to the standard of their country; an assertion, the truth of which has been as strongly illustrated in the existing conflict, as in other events of an important character, during our existence as a nation. Yet, while such a disregard of party has characterized the masses, the volunteers themselves, amongst the rest, when our country is fighting against a foreign power, what do we behold in the President of the United States? He has had the appointment, at various times, of sixteen major generals and brigadier generals, or of fourteen, two having declined to accept. Look at the list, from Lieutenant General Benton down to the smallest brigadier general—for there were some small brigadier generals—and you will find that not one solitary man has ever been taken from the Whig party; a party, to say the least, which has furnished one-half of the volunteers who have rushed forward to share in the glory acquired in the Mexican war. Not one, except Cadwallader, and he is a neutral; and, without meaning the slightest disrespect for him, for I admire the name, I would not give a fig for a neutral, for neutrals generally incline over to the side of power. Now, with that single exception, what do you behold? These sixteen generals, (or these fifteen, at any rate,) taken from the Democratic party, while our friends of the Whig party are doing as much hard fighting in Mexico as our friends of the Democratic party! What is the case in regard to other officers? Ten colonels, ten lieutenant colonels, twenty majors, a number of quartermasters, assistant quartermasters, commissaries, &c., have been appointed in these ten regiments, and what was the result, sir? If I am not mistaken, in looking into the subject with care, I do not think, out of the whole

number, a dozen Whigs have been appointed. If I am mistaken, let some gentleman correct me. And besides this, some three or four hundred inferior officers, or probably more, have been appointed. In reply to any remonstrance as to the appointments to the higher grades, the President might have said, with some show, though but small, of reason or propriety, "well, as I consider this a political affair, I want my own friends taken care of out of the higher stations, and you may have a fair proportion of the inferior offices, especially as the incumbents will have to come into contact with the men, and half the men are Whigs." But he did not rise high enough above mere party feeling to take even this view. Out of these three or four hundred subaltern or company officers, I should like to find the names of fifty Whigs. And yet, I presume, it will not be denied that the Whigs have volunteered for this war with as much alacrity as the Democrats, and have fought as hard and as well. It does seem to me, Mr. Chairman, much of a partisan as I may be esteemed, that, had I been in the Presidential Chair, I should have blushed with very shame in conferring almost all the military offices within my gift, when we were engaged in mortal combat with a foreign power, upon men belonging to my own political sect, especially if I had proclaimed to the world beforehand that, in the administration of the high duties of my station, I should act as the Chief Magistrate of the Nation, and not as the Head of a Party. If, sir, the President or his friends can show me that there is not the right sort of *stuff* in the Whig ranks, of which to form generals and colonels, &c., then I will make my bow to him, and admit that he has acted right. But, as long as I can point to such men as Campbell, (of my own State,) McKee, Hardin, Clay—the gallant son of a noble sire—as long as I can point to two gentlemen on this floor, one my own colleague, (Col. HASKELL,) and the other a distinguished gentleman from Kentucky, (Major GAINES,) so long I will say that any man who takes that position is entirely mistaken. It is well known that we had more such men as these among our volunteers, to say nothing of the many gallant Whigs in the regular service. It was impossible for the President of the United States to make such a mistake, unless he did it designedly, and with a view of doing what has never been done before—of carrying partisan feelings into the apportionment of military honors and appointments among those gallantly engaged in the defence of our common country.

I will sum up my arguments, Mr. Chairman, under this head, in a few words. The President has shown himself to be so much of a partisan, and so little of a patriot, that I am unwilling to lay aside the general objections I have expressed to an increase of executive patronage, and to confer upon him the power of appointment that would result from the establishment of ten new regiments of regulars. I have no disposition to impugn the motives of any man; but I may be allowed to say, that an important election is approaching, and that five or six hundred additional electioneers, thrown into different

towns and counties of this Union, under captivating military titles, might possibly be able to increase the strength of the Administration, or to promote the views of those who are expecting to follow in the footsteps of the present incumbents. I would not do the slightest injustice, in advance, to such gentlemen as may receive appointments, if these additional regiments are raised; but I am certain I shall not be thought to transgress the rules of good breeding and propriety, in saying, that it is human nature to aid those who have aided us, or to believe that the party ought to continue in power which has exhibited a just appreciation of our ability and services by appointing us to office.

I now come to a very important matter, and one to which, in the very short time yet allowed to me, I fear I shall not be able to do anything like justice.

Mr. Chairman, this is a startling crisis; these are alarming times. And yet the people seem to be sleeping over the edge of a dreadful precipice. Such a crisis has not arisen since the foundation of this Government. Talk to me of your embargo laws, your tariff excitements, your nullification, or your last war with Great Britain; there never has occurred, in the whole course of our national existence, so fearful, so momentous a crisis in our affairs, as now stares us in the face. We are called upon to "swallow" eight or nine millions of people, to subjugate and annex a large territory to this—a territory inhabited by men of a different blood, of a different color, and, above all, of a different religion! And this proposition is made in high places; and yet you do not see the whole people rising up, as if moved by one mind, and actuated by a common sense of danger, and saying to this spirit of aggression and conquest which now seems to govern the Executive and some of his friends, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." That very apathy, that very failure thus to rise up, almost congeals my very heart's blood, for it is an evidence that the people are not as wide awake to the danger as they ought to be.

Gentlemen may assert that these are not the intentions of the Executive. But there is not a man of sense or observation in this House, who does not know that they are the intentions of the dominant party. Look at the declarations of some of its prominent members in the Senate; at the toast drank at the late 8th of January celebration, by a distinguished Senator from New York, (Mr. DICKINSON,) "A more perfect Union—embracing the whole American Continent"—take heed to what you hear every day in the streets; converse with gentlemen of the Democratic party, who will boldly avow their sentiments—and I have conversed with such—and they will tell you, that upon their banners, in the next Presidential contest, they will inscribe the inspiring words, "The whole of Mexico," and thus insure an easy victory. "The whole of Oregon" was once their watchword; and many of those who raised it, the President amongst the rest, were discomfited, if not disgraced. May the same fate attend those who, for the mere purposes of party, and with the

view to success in the coming election, are willing to jeopard the very existence of this great nation!

Sir, I object to the subjugation and annexation of Mexico. I am opposed to the dismemberment of a neighboring Republic. I am opposed to it, because it is fraught with evils that may lead to revolution, to ruin, to destruction. I would like to dwell upon this subject, sir, if I had the time; but there are other matters to which I wish to call attention, and I am admonished by the inexorable representative of the *hour rule*, that but small space is yet remaining to me. By the by, sir, this is a most tyrannical rule, and if I had fifteen minutes to spare I would rail against it; but I shall not, as my immediate predecessor, (Mr. EWING)—a man who always elucidates any subject which he discusses—is said to have done—take half my hour in complaining of it.

I would like, sir, to give my reasons at length for opposing the subjugation and annexation of the whole of Mexico; I may do so hereafter. For the present, I can only advert to one or two suggestions which have been made by some of those who are in favor of this monstrous proposition.

I have heard the assertion made by persons in favor of the annexation of Mexico, that it could be done without the slightest inconvenience or danger; and they referred to the annexation of Texas, and to the addition to our population every year by emigration, as an evidence of our capacity safely “to swallow” every thing that might come in our way. The cases are entirely dissimilar. Texas was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. An overwhelming majority of her citizens were our brethren; they were linked to us by blood and by birth, and possessed laws, customs, and habits similar to our own. As far as emigration is concerned, it may be said that the annual amount is so small, compared with our whole population, as to be easily absorbed. Even if that amount were increased, I should apprehend but small danger from it. The effect would only be such as is produced by the Mississippi as it rolls its mighty volume into the ocean—it tinges the blue waves, with its peculiar color, a few miles out, and then is swallowed up in the boundless expanse. Emigrants soon assimilate themselves to our manners and customs; and the sooner, in a majority of cases, because they speak the same language and are of the same blood. How different would be the effect if the whole of Mexico were added—with a population equal to more than one-third of our own—and such a population—ignorant, superstitious, and anarchical—unlike us in almost every natural and national characteristic! From the day this deed is done, we are a doomed nation, and the fairest structure of freedom ever erected by human intelligence will be levelled to the ground, or so defaced and despoiled as to become an eye-sore and an abomination. I protest against any step which may be fraught with such fearful evils. In the name of my country, of humanity, of true and enlightened liberty throughout the world, I protest against it!

But my *hour* is drawing to a close, and I must pass on.

I wish, Mr. Chairman, distinctly to avow my sentiments on one subject—the acquisition of territory. I am opposed to such acquisition by violence or conquest—by the forcible dismemberment of a neighboring republic; but I should not be unwilling to obtain such territory as might be deemed necessary for legitimate purposes, by treaty or negotiation. For my position on this subject I could advance abundant reasons, had I the time. A future opportunity, however, may be afforded me for presenting them to this House.

When men go on for a series of years, Mr. Chairman, prospering and to prosper, or have met unexpectedly with great good fortune, they are usually so blinded by success as to think that reverse can never overtake them; but, when they least anticipate it, their well-digested calculations may be foiled, and they themselves be liable to discomfiture, if not disgrace. There is such a thing, too, as moral retribution, even in this life—and such retribution, in my opinion, is about to be visited upon the President. I cannot divest myself of the belief that one of his reasons for plunging this country into war was the desire to make use again—either for his own re-election, or the continued ascendancy of his party—of that powerful feeling in the bosoms of his countrymen—of which such good use had been previously made—in favor of more territory, more LAND; a feeling whose intensity is probably increased by the fact that ours is one of the few nations on earth where every man can obtain, if he will, a freehold estate—“a clear and unquestionable title” in a portion of the soil. But what has been the result of this effort to lay the foundation of a new triumph? Where is the moral retribution? It consists in this: The President selected, as the principal of his military agents to carry his object into effect, a plain, unassuming, simple-hearted, noble-natured man, who had not been extensively known in our country—who was an officer in the last war, and had obtained reputation in Florida, but whose greatest distinction had always been a faithful discharge of his duty in whatever position he was placed. That man was but a colonel—a brigadier-general by brevet—but, passing over the commander-in-chief of the army, the President placed him at the head of the forces intended for the “occupation,” or, as has turned out, for “the conquest” of Mexico. What has been the result? The name of that comparatively undistinguished officer is, at this moment, upon the lips of every man, woman, and child in this broad Union, and is rarely mentioned but in terms of praise and affection. The people have set him in their hearts as one of their brightest jewels—as only inferior in purity and sterling worth to Washington. They have indicated their intention to place him in the seat which was once illustrated by the wisdom and virtue of that great man; and the gratifying prospect is, that not all the efforts, the schemes and plots, of the President and his party can prevent the glorious consummation. Here is a moral retribution! The very act, the very course of conduct which, in my opinion, the Executive had adopted as the means of his own aggrandizement, or the continued suc-

cess of his own party, has been the cause of bringing forward a man, who, in all the elements of true greatness, is far above him, and who, in all probability, will be his successor!

Before passing from this branch of my subject, sir, I will take leave to read a short extract from a paper which came into my possession this morning. It is the Baltimore Sun of the 24th, (to-day,) and contains a speech of General Taylor, recently delivered at Lafayette, Louisiana; and I am delighted to see, to mark, the difference of sentiment, in regard to Mexico, between a man who has achieved the greatest military triumph ever obtained on this continent, and a man who, safely ensconced here in his snug habitation, at the distance of more than a thousand miles from the scene of conflict, coolly advises that the reeking steel shall be plunged into the very vitals of the prostrate foe!

Hear what old "Rough and Ready" says:

"The object nearest to his heart had been to bring the war to a speedy termination—to restore peace and amity between two neighboring Republics, who had every motive to cultivate mutual good will, and whom he would prefer to see vying with each other in the arts of peace, rather than contending on the field of battle.

"He had always hoped and believed that, by that spirit of forbearance and magnanimity which a great and powerful nation should always practise towards a feeble and prostrate enemy, peace might be restored on terms consistent with the honor, the rights, and the interests of both nations."

[The hour allotted to Mr. BARROW here expired, and the Chairman's hammer fell.]

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